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ABSTRACT

Home visits are becoming an important part of family education and support programs such as Even Start. Over time, the objectives of home visits have shifted from a deficit model, which was aimed solely at solving problems, to an empowerment model, which focuses on ameliorating conditions which lead to familial problems. The empowerment model builds on family strengths, helps families define goals and make decisions, and provides access to needed resources. Home visits give practitioners a holistic view of: (1) the child's environment; (2) family dynamics; (3) the family's unmet needs; and (4) parenting styles. Visits also facilitate parent-program cooperation and deepen the parent-practitioner relationship. Visits also facilitate communication and show children that their parents are respected by others. Some goals of home visits should be: (1) to build mutual trust; (2) to assess, acknowledge, and build on family strengths; and (3) to provide guidance on designing a home environment that facilitates child development and helps parents achieve their goals. The first visit is an important step in achieving these goals, and subsequent visits should have instructional value and build parent-program rapport. Includes a list of resources. Contains 17 references. (JW)

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Home Visiting

Forging the Home-School Connection

BY MILDRED WINTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PARENTS AS TEACHERS

One in a Series of Papers for Even Start Project Managers

Commissioned by the US Department of Education

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Home Visiting

Forging the Home-School Connection

BY MILDRED WINTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PARENTS AS TEACHERS

The practice of sending visitors into families' homes to provide parenting education is not a new idea, but one that has become an integral part of a growing number of family education and support programs such as Even Start. This can be attributed to the fact that substantial evidence exists of the payoff of early family-focused prevention programs that employ home visiting. There is evidence as well of the costs of not providing such services in terms of child maltreatment and early school failure.

Home visiting offers Even Start families the special advantage of one-to-one relationships that promote adult and child growth and development. It enhances the program's potential for improving the ecology of family life because of the remarkable insight gained from working in the home on a sustaining basis.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Home visiting has existed since Elizabethan times in England. It has existed in the United States since at least the 1890s, changing over time in purpose, form, and population served.

In the late 1800s charity organizations sent volunteers to the homes of the urban poor to provide moral and behavioral guidance and serve as models of right living. Because it was believed that poverty was the result of character flaws and human failings that were correctable by a home visitor's friendship, services related to employment, health care and such were deemed unnecessary. Revamping began to take place when friendly visitors decided that friendship and good example were not enough, given the reality of hard core poverty. Visitors began to act as brokers and advocates, helping families access needed services. By the turn of the century it became clear that even the revamped conception of friendly visiting was an inadequate response to urban poverty (Weiss, 1993). Volunteer friendly visitors gave way to visiting teachers, nurses, and social workers, who were committed to enhancing their effectiveness by changing the environment of their clients.

In the mid-1950s the home became recognized as a desirable setting for handicapped children, and professionals began to provide support to parents in rearing them. Home visiting saw a major upswing during the War on Poverty in the 1960s as a vehicle for enhancing young children's school readiness. Early intervention in the home was seen as far more effective and less costly than later remediation. As home visitors of the turn of the century had discovered, teaching and nurturing their young child may not be a top priority of mothers who are concerned about adequate food and shelter. Thus, in the 1970s programs tended to include attention to broader family needs along with parenting and child development. The seventies also saw the expansion of parenting education programs that were open to all families, acknowledging the need for parent education and support across educational and socioeconomic lines (Wasik, 1990).

We have seen a shift over time from a deficit model of home visiting, that is aimed at fixing problems to an empowerment model that builds on family strengths, helping families define goals, make decisions, and access needed resources. Services

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have shifted focus from the individual or family to the family system. The help giver has changed from expert problem solver and decision maker to collaborator and facilitator.

This brings us into the 1990s and the opportunity to use what has been learned to craft home visiting as a key component of a comprehensive delivery system that helps Even Start families create a better life for themselves and their children.

BENEFITS OF HOME VISITING

Home visits have a number of unique features that distinguish them from center-based services. First, they take place in the home where families live and children grow up. This gives the visitor a holistic view of the child and family in the home and neighborhood context, which includes a sense of unmet health, economic, education, and social service needs that impinge on parenting. As a result of this insight, both home and center-based services can be better tailored to individual home and family circumstances.

Second, home visits signal the program's willingness to accommodate family schedules, even when mothers work outside the home, and to operate on the family's turf. This sets the tone for a less formal, more relaxed relationship between the visiting professional or paraprofessional and parents. It helps to equalize the balance of power between parent and visitor, which is especially important with families whose prior experiences with school and other agencies have not been positive. Parents who feel isolated and burdened with the demands of parenting respond to visitors who evidence genuine interest and empathy. It is not uncommon for participants to come to regard the home visitor as a friend or more like a member of the family than as an outside expert.

Third, the special relationship that develops between parents and home visitors is key to the program's effectiveness in enhancing the home environment to improve socialization, health, and education practices that support child and adult development. Attention is given to helping parents discover resources and methods of improving situations and home practices that make it difficult for them to be responsive to their children.

Fourth, parents can have their questions and concerns about parenting answered in the privacy of their home. Parents of all social and economic strata want to do a good job, but limited positive experience or knowledge about child rearing can get in the way. They struggle to understand their children's behavior and are anxious to find out if what they observe and experience with their children is normal.

No aspect of development—intellectual, motor, or emotional—proceeds in a straight line (Brazelton, 1992). There are rapid spurts, followed by periods of leveling off. Just before each developmental change, as in mastering walking, there is a short and predictable period of disorganization when parents fear the child is falling apart and wonder where they've gone wrong. Parents are often reluctant to ask questions in a group setting which might suggest ignorance on their part. Receiving assurance from the home visitor that this is normal behavior and hearing praise for the child's accomplishment give parents a sense of relief and pleasure and bolster their self-confidence.

Finally, children benefit. They are dependent on the key adults in their lives to foster a sense of security, trust, and self-esteem. Children's feelings of self-worth are enhanced when they see that their parents or other primary caregivers are valued and respected by others, particularly by someone whom

they come to regard as teacher. Another obvious benefit for children is the opportunity home visiting affords for all of the caring adults to share observations and insights that help guide the child's development knowledgeably.

BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIP

Families and schools share a common goal: to have all children develop to their fullest potential—to become all that they can be. Instructional home visits are designed to help achieve that goal. A true partnership between parents and Even Start is the foundation of successful home visits. This partnership is built on mutual respect that acknowledges parents as experts on their own children by virtue of their special knowledge and insight that comes from everyday living with them. It acknowledges home visitors as caring professionals who have research based information to share on child development and child rearing that promotes growth and learning. Each member of the partnership has much to teach and learn from the other.

The Even Start home visitor, as a representative of the collaborative effort between the school and other community agencies, learns more fully about the family's beliefs and values, goals and expectations of its children. The home visitor can demystify the school's expectations and add to parents' understanding of how and why learning occurs. Experience has shown that parents who come to see themselves as their children's first and most influential teachers are likely to stay involved in their children's education during the formal school experience (Winter, 1993).

Home visits of an instructional nature are designed to strengthen the capacity of families to provide a quality education delivery system for their children. The following objectives for home visiting are aimed at achieving this goal:

- Build a mutually trusting relationship with the family.
- Acknowledge and build on family strength and values. Provide timely information on children's development and emerging skills that parents can apply.
- Observe, model, promote, and affirm positive adult-child interactions. Help parents become astute observers of their children and set realistic goals for them.
- Provide guidance on designing a home environment that encourages the development of language, curiosity, intellectual ability, physical and emotional well-being, and social skills.
- Help families achieve their personal goals by facilitating access to program and community resources as needed (Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 1993).

The First Visit.

The first home visit with a family requires special planning because it will, in large measure predict the quality and direction of subsequent visits. The first step is to establish the rapport that is crucial to being invited back. This begins with friendly, relaxed conversation that allows parents and the visitor to get to know one another. Intrusive questions should be avoided, such as asking a single mother for information about the child's father beyond what she volunteers. Assurance should be given that information shared by families and the

activities that take place during visits are held in confidence.

The second step in the initial visit is to agree upon the purposes and the benefits of instructional home visits as an integral component of Even Start. Parents should see themselves as the gatekeepers of the home literacy environment. They must understand the reasons for the learning activities that will be a part of every home visit. This is the time to learn from parents what their expectations of the home visit are and to correct any misperceptions.

It is well to remember that it is the visitor who must adapt and it is the parent who determines the nature of the adaptation (Powell, 1990). In addition to time and place, parents decide who is present during the visit—grandparents or other adults in the home, neighbors and their young children, older siblings, and pets.

The respective roles of parents and home visitors need to be defined from the outset. Parents should be affirmed as their children's most important teachers. As such, they are expected to be active participants in the learning activities with their child. It may come as a surprise to parents that the home visitor plays a guiding, consulting, supporting role and is not there primarily to instruct the child. Parents need to be acknowledged as partners who will engage in joint decision-making about this teaching-learning process.

During the first visit, as in all that are to follow, the visitor should have a well-constructed home visit plan based on input from parents and a curriculum that suggests age-appropriate parent-child activities that will provide enjoyment and success for everyone involved. Most home visits should last no more than an hour so that the child does not tire and the parent does not have too much time taken from other interests. If the visitor leaves with the family feeling comfortable and looking forward to the next visit, the primary goal of the first visit has been accomplished.

Components of Instructional Home Visits.

The goals for home visiting, which are based on the family needs assessment, the level of parenting skills, recommendations of preschool and elementary teachers, and amount of time parents feel they can give, determine the frequency of the visits. Families in crisis, teen parents, or those whose children need help with schoolwork, for example, warrant weekly or bi-weekly visits. Monthly visits may prove adequate for those who can carry out suggested learning activities with their child independently. Whatever the frequency, there are five components that make for a well rounded visit. These are rapport building, observation, discussion, parent-child activity, and summary (Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 1993).

Building Rapport. After greeting parents, child, and any others present, a brief, friendly conversation of timely interest is in order to get a feel of how things are going and help everyone become comfortable. If the child is playing with a toy, it is well to join in the play, reinforcing the idea of following the child's lead. For the parents' benefit, the visitor may suggest ways in which the use of that particular toy can be expanded. If the infant is too young for toys, the conversation will likely revolve around sleeping, eating, crying, and activity during alert times. For preschoolers or school-aged children, conversation that invites showing or telling about a new interest, a prized possession, or a favorite preschool or school activity helps to put them at ease.

Observation. In observing and discussing the child's developmental characteristics and emerging skills, first priority should be given to parents' comments and questions. Relating what is observed to what can be expected, as in children's response to books, helps parents appreciate their child's growing capabilities. Observation continues throughout the visit, affirming parenting skills as they are evidenced in parent-child interaction.

Discussion. This centers around what is special about this age. For example, with a twomonth-old discussions about attachment, development of trust, understanding and responding to baby's cries, and the importance of immunizations are all timely. Parents should be helped to recognize and build on their own strengths—what they are doing right. Assistance with problem solving around difficult situations, such as sibling rivalry, is in order. Helping parents plan how to allow each child to be "number one" in some way each day, for example, offers an alternative for actions that may be inappropriate or harmful to children.

Parent-Child Activity. The focus of the one or more developmentally appropriate activities introduced by the home visitor is on play as legitimate learning. Modeling first before drawing the parents into the activity helps to ensure that the parents will experience success. Pointing out key things the child does and providing developmental interpretations of what is observed help parents gain understanding of the meaning of the child's actions both at home and in group settings at the Even Start center. Modeling positive reinforcements to the child and bolstering parents' confidence as teachers are essential.

Summary. To bring closure to the visit, the home visitor should review what has happened and been observed, then jot down and talk about the two or three most important points of the visit. As with a handout that is left with the parents suggesting things to watch for and do with their child following the visit, written information should be easy to read and understand. Some parents may need to call on other family members or the adult education instructor to assist with written information. Home visits offer a prime opportunity to integrate Even Start program components by tying the home instruction to adult education, to the early childhood classroom activities, and to the elementary school curriculum.

Special Considerations.

New dimensions are added to the personal visit when a new baby is born, when more than one child is present during the visit, or when the child enters preschool or elementary school. With parents there will be additional issues to discuss, such as siblings' intrusiveness with each other or what the child is learning outside the home.

Since the older child will likely demand attention, it is helpful to engage him or her in introducing a toy to the younger child, letting him hold it first and give it to the younger one. Discussing the younger child's actions with the older child will inform the parent while making the older child feel involved and important. Choosing activities and materials carefully is critical. Depending on the ages of the children, suggestions include: doing activities that two or more children can do, i.e., playdough, pouring birdseed, or building with blocks; choosing similar activities for each with different levels of difficulty, i.e., puzzles, and crayons and paper. It is wise to take along books and games that can keep older children who may be present occupied long enough to allow for some uninterrupted focus on the child who is the subject of the visit. At times, it may be necessary to help parents arrange for older children to be absent during the home visit or to conduct the visit someplace other than the home.

New dimensions are also added to the visit when other adults are present along with the primary participant. Relatives who are part of the extended family, friends, or neighbors may be there to check out the program or to take part. The Even Start program in Webster Groves, Missouri, finds a team approach to home visiting to be effective in this regard. The counselor, family advocate, or adult educator may join the family educator in the visit, taking in information, books, and activities that are relevant to everyone present, including additional children.

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NURTURING LITERACY THROUGH HOME VISITS

Emphasis on the child's language development should permeate instructional home visits with young children, particularly in Even Start. It begins with showing parents, from their first interactions with their newborns, the importance of responding to the child's vocalizations and how to capture the teachable moments in everyday living to enhance language development (Winter and Rouse, 1991). Parents should be encouraged to be attentive listeners and appropriate questioners as they learn to engage their young child in conversations about what is happening around them. Home visitors should stress the significant relationship between hearing and language development, so that parents will take advantage of hearing screening and seek medical attention promptly for ear infections.

Involving babies with books from infancy on and helping children develop a love of stories should be a part of every visit. Research findings are well known on the value of reading to the child regularly during the preschool years, having people in the home stimulate the child's interest in reading and writing, and having a variety of printed materials, paper, and pencils available in the home.

Home visits offer opportunity to use developmentally appropriate books routinely during home visits to show parents the kinds of books the child will enjoy at each age and to model their use with the child. Parents of newborns, for example, should be encouraged to recite nursery rhymes to their babies so they can enjoy the rhythm of the language while being held close. Placing the infant on his stomach regularly each day with an open book propped in front of him provides something interesting to see as he practices raising his head. As the baby grows, parents learn to expect her to mouth vinyl and cardboard books as she explores her environment. As manipulation gives way to greater interest in the content of books, parents should be shown how to choose books with bright, simple pictures and few words, and encouraged to make up the words if they cannot read. Parents should be encouraged to give in to "book binges," accommodating the child who wants to hear the same book over and over and over again. Families need to know that the practice of reading and enjoying books with children begun early on should be continued throughout childhood. Providing a book lending library for use in home visits should be a high priority in Even Start. Home visiting can strongly influence reading in the home much as the Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program at Boston City Hospital does, finding that parents attach importance to books because doctors "prescribe" them (Carnegie Corporation, 1993).

COMPETENCIES AND QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL HOME VISITOR

Home visiting is demanding work that is best carried out by mature individuals whose life experiences enhance their capacity to help others (Wasik, 1990). Home visitors need to be outgoing, comfortable with strangers, unflappable in new situations, well organized, nonjudgmental, and tactful. In identifying individuals who will work best with Even Start families, consider the families to be served—their backgrounds, their attitudes about children, their cultural values that influence them as parents. Whom would they welcome into their home? Whom would they respect and listen to?

Home visitors are required to be both child development specialists and family specialists. Candidates need in-depth knowledge of early childhood development and should have had supervised experience in working with young children and parents. They should also have a strong working knowledge of how adults learn, since their role is to help parents become the best possible teachers and nurturers of their children. They may come from the fields of education, health care, or social work. Classroom teachers must be able to make the transition from managing a group of children in a classroom to working with adults and children in someone else's living room.

Many parent education and family support programs choose local community members as key staff contacts with parents. This approach offers the advantages of providing training and employment for community residents, drawing on knowledge of the community gained from living there, and avoiding disparities in culture, language, and values between families and staff. It is not critical that home visitors be of the same ethnicity or culture as the families they serve, but that they understand and respect the values and beliefs of various cultures and can respond sensitively (Wasik, 1990). It is critical, however, that home visitors, whether they be professional educators or community members, be accountable for ongoing planning for instructional visits with input from other Even Start staff. In the District of Columbia, where Even Start, Head Start, and Parents as Teachers are coordinated under one administrator, professionals and paraprofessionals from all three components participate in cross-training, information exchange, and joint planning, thereby strengthening services to families.

The quality of the human connection between home visitor and families is probably the best predictor of service effectiveness. "Warm and caring" probably tops the list of characteristics programs look for in choosing home visitors. Other interpersonal qualities that are essential for home visiting include a non-judgmental, healthy attitude toward families and the ability to set boundaries, e.g., not to become so involved in family stress so as to lose the focus of the home visit. The ability to maintain an appropriate sense of humor in the face of stress is not to be overlooked.

Active listening is key to establishing a trusting relationship because it communicates: I hear what you are feeling, I value your abilities, I am interested and concerned, I am not judging or evaluating. One needs to be comfortable with silence, to ask open-ended questions, to avoid filling in or stepping in, to be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal communication from the family. It is critical that the home visitor's body language and voice tone convey warmth, respect, and genuine interest.

Since a major purpose of home visiting is to tailor information on child development and child rearing practices to family needs and interests, home visitors must be able to convey this information in language that is clearly understood, positive in nature, and not condescending. Information and issues addressed, as well as parent-child activities suggested, should be geared to the interests and concerns of father figures as well as mothers in order to nurture male involvement in children's development and learning. Male caregivers have their own special way of interacting with young children, which should be acknowledged and encouraged. Activities such as washing the car together, shoveling dirt or snow, playing catch, going to the gas station, or reading action-filled stories are rich in opportunities for developing understanding and use of language. Every effort should be made to schedule visits when father figures and other significant caregivers can be present.

Observation is one of the most important skills needed by the home visitor. It is one that must be fostered in parents as well. Understanding the organization of the home and the resources avail-

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able to the family, as well as the interaction among family members, gives the home visitor a base on which to draw in building on family strengths. It is the means by which the visitor identifies parental expectations, as well as behavior and development of children in relation to expected norms. Objective, positive observation is essential for documenting the proceedings of a home visit for accountability purposes and for planning the next visit.

Last, but certainly not least, is the ability to empower parents—facilitating or maintaining the family's ability to define its own goals and make its own decisions (Wasik, 1990). Empowerment implies that many competencies are already present or are possible and that new competencies can be learned. This calls for a helping relationship that works continually toward promoting parents' independence in coping and problem solving.

CHALLENGES FACING HOME VISITORS

Working in homes of families who live in stressful situations requires ability to recognize signs or behaviors that are indicators of serious problems and the realization that other resources may need to be accessed to address the situation. The most severe of these problems are violence, including child abuse, and substance abuse.

Abuse and Violence.

Abusive parents often have unrealistic expectations of the child due to lack of knowledge of development and skills in managing behavior. These deficiencies can certainly be addressed through home visits. If, despite the help that is given, the severity of the problem warrants reporting, program policy should be followed in advocating for the child.

In the case of violence against adults, the home visitor should be a sympathetic listener and a support, but should refrain from giving advice. One way of offering help is to engage parents in active problem solving around the situation. If at any time the home visitor feels endangered, the visit should be terminated immediately and visiting discontinued until it is determined that the danger has abated. Program policy should address all aspects of safety for home visitors.

The effects of parental substance abuse on parenting are of grave concern, increasing the risk for child abuse and neglect. Home visitors should be aware of the fact that dysfunctional behavior on the part of the parents observed over time suggests the possibility of substance abuse. If parents are unwilling to seek help with this problem that seriously impairs parental functioning, they may well be unlikely to benefit from what home visiting has to offer.

Specialized training for home visitors on dealing with violence, abuse and neglect, and substance abuse should be provided or accessed.

Teen Parents.

Working with teen parents may present the greatest challenge to some home visitors. Adolescents are in a period of development when they are loosening their ties with their parents and establishing a sense of independence. Teen pregnancy and parenting complicate this considerably. Pressures abound to complete their education, learn job skills, care for a baby, earn money, and have a social life.

"Who's in charge of this baby?" becomes an issue for the home visitor. The teen may or may not agree with her mother's approach to child rearing. The baby may have so many bosses that he gets mixed messages. Home visiting often becomes a three generation affair. The whole issue of family dynamics becomes a major consideration in working with teen families (Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 1992).

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Home visitors need to be prepared to deal with problematic interactions between teen mothers and fathers and their infants. Teens tend to be aggressive in their play and handle babies too roughly. They need to learn that baby's body is fragile and understand the implications of the shaken baby syndrome. Teen parents often tease their young children as they would their peers, ignoring their pleas to stop. Becoming angry over a child's behavior is a hazard caused by lack of understanding of the child's developmental stage. Insensitivity to baby's cues, unclear communication, and critical talk are all common behaviors that warrant particular attention by the home visitor. Clearly, addressing the challenge of serving teen parents calls for specialized training and resources.

Working with Grandparents.

When grandparents are the recipients of home visits it is well to remember that they may not relish the role of parenting again. There may be disagreement between parent and grandparent on child rearing practices, resulting in tension between adults and confusion for the child. Effort should be made to involve the parent in the visit as often as possible to help achieve consensus on child rearing. Group meetings scheduled just for grandparents serve to acknowledge their importance and to listen and respond to their concerns.

Other Challenges.

Home visitors need to be emotionally strong and possess a good deal of common sense. Forming helping relationships is a complex and often arduous process (Stott and Musick, 1994). In fulfilling their personal and professional goals as home visitors, they will encounter difficulties that require abilities and capacities that include the following.

- Capacity to master one's own anxiety and wait for resolution. This can be very difficult. There is temptation to rush in and "fix" problems, rather than listening, suggesting, and waiting.
- Respect of the family's right to self-determination. This is hard to maintain when the home visitor recognizes parents' actions to be destructive or futile. People learn from experience, so supporting parents in making decisions increases their competence in making good choices.
- Ability to deal with resistance or lack of motivation. Home visiting can be frustrating when parents do not seem to be motivated to fulfill the program's expectations. The question should be asked if the goals not being met are valued by the parents. Barriers need to be considered that may prevent parents from working toward their goals. Expectations for this family may need to be changed.
- Understanding of the balance between professional concern for families and maintaining distance. In order to be truly effective, home visitors need to remain objective and not over identify with parents. The professional educator often serves as a role model for parents. There needs to be enough distance between them so that this modeling continues to guide behavior. Home visitors cannot allow themselves to become too emotionally involved with their families or feel personally responsible for solving their problems.
- Ability to engage in self-reflection. It is this capacity that enables a home visitor to develop healthy relationships with families and recognize his or her reactions to hard-to-like parents without acting on them. This reflection takes place in the context of supervision that helps the staff member develop a clearer vision of the work and the knowledge, skill, values, and attitudes she or he brings to it.

Implications for Program Planning and Design.

Just as home visitors provide support to families, so too do they need support from their programs. In addition to preservice preparation, home

visitors need ongoing inservice training, supervision and consultation. Program directors play multiple roles serving at different times as the administrator who requires accountability, the teacher who enhances skills and competencies, and the therapist who facilitates personal and professional development (Wasik, 1993).

In observing home visits, supervisors should use checklists or rating scales to ensure consistency in noting the aspects of the visits that are important to the program. A previsit planning meeting with home visitors and a postvisit feedback session are part of the process.

Home visiting is a position that can be lonely and at times frustrating. It is a program responsibility to reduce stress and prevent burnout. The entire team should contribute to resolving problem situations and linking families with needed services. Using a problem-solving approach in staff meetings models for home visitors the role they are to take with families. Outside resources should be brought in as needed to address the warning signs of stress and stress management, as well as difficult situations for which staff have not found solutions.

Regularly scheduled staff meetings serve to enhance skills and knowledge, to do joint planning, and to celebrate successes. Sharing ideas and activities across program components assists home visitors in pulling it all together for individual families.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Instructional home visiting offers a unique means of hooking families into their children's education from the onset of learning—at birth—and of integrating core services in Even Start. There is a strong knowledge base on which to build to do it well. The challenge for Even Start programs is to position home visiting so that it draws from and adds strength to the total program.

Once the connection between home and the Even Start program has been forged, it must be strengthened on an ongoing basis. The partnership that is formed in the home environment between parents and other teachers on behalf of the child must be acknowledged and nourished as the child moves into the elementary school program in order for the promise to be fully realized.

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Resources

Dunst, C., Trivette, C. & Deal, A. (1988). ***Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice***. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, Inc.

This book was specifically written for practitioners, with a good blend of theory and practice. It has a special focus on building the family's capabilities to cope more effectively on its own. A number of sample forms are included for assessing family needs, functioning style, strengths, and social support.

(Paperback, 219 pages)

Gestwicki, C. (1987). ***Home, school, and community relations: A guide to working with parents***. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, Inc.

This is an easy to use reference for teachers who work with families in the home, day care, preschool, or school settings. The book is rich in examples drawn from the real life experiences of families and teachers that give added meaning to the text. It heightens awareness of what it means to be a parent in today's world. (Paperback, 310 pages)

Behrman, R. (Ed.), (1993). ***The future of children: Home visiting, 3***(3). Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

This journal presents 13 articles on home visiting that provide a multi-disciplinary perspective on the subject. Together, the authors provide a critical analysis of home visiting's effectiveness and how best to design such programs, with the intent that public policies incorporating this approach will have a better chance of improving the well-being of children.

(Paperback, 214 pages)

Wasik, B., Bryant, M. & Lyons, C. (1990). ***Home visiting: Procedures for helping families***. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

This volume is a blend of scholarship and practical methods, providing a wealth of information on home visiting issues and procedures for both beginning and experienced home visitors. Wasik's book is a rich resource that is easy-to-read and use.

(Paperback, 304 pages)

Zigler, E. & Finn-Stevenson, M. (1993). ***Children in a changing world: Development and social issues***. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

This text provides a scientific and comprehensive picture of child development from the prenatal period through adolescence. In examining how children and adults actually live, the authors study the social conditions that influence their lives. This is a classic that can serve as a resource for all who work with young children and their families. (Hardback, 659 pages)